

To: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa[Mcclain-Vanderpool.Lisa@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]; Selia, Emily[Selia.Emily@epa.gov]; Gentile, Laura[Gentile.Laura@epa.gov]; Ragland, Micah[Ragland.Micah@epa.gov]; EOC Public Information[EOC_Public_Information@epa.gov]
From: Ragland, Micah
Sent: Thur 8/20/2015 4:59:45 PM
Subject: APPROVED: Epoch Times Responses

Lisa -- Please find below in text approved responses to the Epoch Times media inquiry. Thx, Micah

Approved Responses to Epoch Times inquiry

1. Did the wastewater from the Red and Bonita mine get pushed into the Gold King Mine?

We have assessed the Red and Bonita mine and to our knowledge, it is not hydraulically connected to the Gold King Mine.

2. What prompted the assessment - Was this a routine thing, consistent with the EPA's efforts to clean up other mines in the area?

While the American Tunnel treatment plant operated, water quality in the Animas River improved. However, since 2005, water quality in the Animas River has not improved and, for at least 20 miles below the confluence with Cement Creek, the water quality has declined significantly. Impacts to aquatic life were also demonstrated by fish population surveys conducted by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, which found no fish in the Animas River below Cement Creek for approximately two miles and observed precipitous declines in fish populations as far as 20 miles downstream since 2005.

Because of this declining water quality in the Animas River, in 2008, EPA's Superfund Site Assessment program began investigations in Upper Cement Creek focused on evaluating whether the Upper Cement Creek area would qualify for inclusion on the NPL. This evaluation indicated that the area would qualify, although after receiving additional community input, EPA postponed efforts to include the area on the National Priorities List. Since that time, EPA has continued and broadened its investigations of conditions at the site in order to understand the major sources of heavy metal contamination in the Upper Animas.

3. What was the deciding factor that led to the assessment on Aug. 5, 2015?

The removal assessment at the Gold King Mine had been planned in conjunction with a plan to install a bulkhead (plug) at the nearby Red and Bonita Mine.

4. What is the plan going forward regarding the plethora of leaky mines in Silverton and throughout Colorado? Will Good Samaritans be deployed to continue the cleanup or will the EPA continue to lead the efforts?

Once the investigation of the Gold King Mine is completed, EPA will issue guidance on future mine work.

5. A previous study indicates this mine was considered a high priority for clean up. When was the last time it was assessed? Were there any prior attempts to clean it?

August 5, 2015 was our first attempt to assess the Gold King Mine and we have not been involved in any prior attempts to clean it up. There have been ongoing site assessments in that watershed mentioned above that have supported the goal to investigate Gold King Mine. The Colorado Department of Reclamation, Mining and Safety was monitoring the Gold King mine situation and ultimately conducted a limited action to stabilize the Gold King portal, secured the opening and channeled the flow in 2009.

From: Ragland, Micah on behalf of EOC Public Information

Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 12:24 PM

To: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa; Press; Selia, Emily; Gentile, Laura; Ragland, Micah

Subject: Re: Revision to document sent re: FW: REGIONAL RESPONSE RE: WSJ QUESTIONS & Epoch times questions

got it, we will send the revised response for number 1 back through EOC OGC and EOC Manager and get back to you all on all 5 responses.

From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa

Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 12:18 PM

To: EOC Public Information; Press; Selia, Emily; Gentile, Laura; Ragland, Micah

Subject: RE: Revision to document sent re: FW: REGIONAL RESPONSE RE: WSJ QUESTIONS & Epoch times questions

All 0 on the first Epoch times question, we may want to change it to something less definitive

since our knowledge of what is going on hydraulically between/among the mines up there is probably evolving.

1. Did the wastewater from the Red and Bonita mine get pushed into the Gold King Mine?

The Red and Bonita has been fully assessed and does not have mine workings that are hydraulically connected to the Gold King Mine. This is largely due to the fact that Red and Bonita is situation at a lower elevation than the Gold King Mine.

Change to: We have assessed the Red and Bonita mine and to our knowledge, it is not hydraulically connected to the Gold King Mine.

Lisa McClain-Vanderpool

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From: Selia, Emily **On Behalf Of** EOC Public Information

Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 9:22 AM

To: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa; Press; Selia, Emily; Gentile, Laura; Ragland, Micah; EOC Public Information

Subject: Re: Revision to document sent re: FW: REGIONAL RESPONSE RE: WSJ QUESTIONS / JIC/EOC ACTION

yep, we saw it and are on it. thx for double checking

From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 11:16 AM
To: EOC Public Information; Press; Selia, Emily; Gentile, Laura
Subject: RE: Revision to document sent re: FW: REGIONAL RESPONSE RE: WSJ
QUESTIONS / JIC/EOC ACTION

Micah – are you also working with the other Q&A doc I sent? For Epoch times?

Wanted to make sure someone saw that one and it's going through review.

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From: Ragland, Micah **On Behalf Of** EOC Public Information
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 7:47 AM
To: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa; Press; Selia, Emily; Gentile, Laura; EOC Public Information
Subject: Re: Revision to document sent re: FW: REGIONAL RESPONSE RE: WSJ
QUESTIONS / JIC/EOC ACTION

Got it, thanks Lisa. We will use this version and I am reaching out to Steve Way now on
WSJ's question #10

From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 7:58 PM
To: EOC Public Information; Press
Subject: Revision to document sent re: FW: REGIONAL RESPONSE RE: WSJ QUESTIONS / JIC/EOC ACTION

Just had a slight edit to the name of the site on question #9.

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From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 5:28 PM
To: EOC Public Information; Press
Cc: Smith, Paula; Mylott, Richard; Jenkins, Laura Flynn
Subject: REGIONAL RESPONSE RE: WSJ QUESTIONS / JIC/EOC ACTION

Need Steve Way to address last question.

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